

January 2024

To: The Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

RE: LD 2141– An Act to Enhance Protections for and Better Address Invasive Aquatic Plant Infestations in Inland Waters of the State

Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry, and members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, my name is Stacey Keefer, Director for the Maine Marine Trades Association (MMTA), and a resident of Union. MMTA represents over 120 Maine businesses and an industry comprised of boatyards, boat builders, marinas, boat dealers, and marine retailers.

On behalf of the members of MMTA, we would like to extend support for this bill that aims to fund efforts to preserve water quality and protect native aquatic species in Maine waters. Though agencies, nonprofits, businesses, and individuals do what we can to educate people about aquatic invasive species and their harmful impacts, we do recognize the need for state funding to help with inspections and enforcement of critical boating protocols. We cannot rely so heavily on volunteers and nonprofit-funded staff to manage this statewide need.

Though nobody wants to see the word “restriction” around water access, we do recognize that strong measures may be needed to prevent the spread of invasive species where there are known infestations. We trust that the two Departments would make appropriate and reasonable decisions around any protocols that could potentially restrict any water access. Hopefully those types of restrictions would not be permanent, but they might certainly increase the awareness of how risky any water activity can be to the health of unaffected areas of the same, or nearby, water bodies.

I will remind the Committee that the boating and fishing sector of the outdoor recreation economy continues to have the largest value-added impact relative to all other forms of outdoor activities –both in Maine and on the national level. Protecting the quality of Maine lakes is important for a healthy environment, healthy wildlife, and also to maintain the quality of water that boaters and anglers seek in our world-class waterways. We hope you will consider supporting LD 2141.

Due to a previously scheduled meeting, I am unable to join the public hearing today, but would be happy to respond to any follow up questions via my email listed below if desired.

Respectfully,



Stacey Keefer, Maine Marine Trades Association, Executive Director
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